A Cry For Help Almost Unanswered
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Character:	Gordon Freeman, Tommy Coolatta, Benrey (Half-Life), Bubby (Half-Life), Dr. Coomer (Half-Life)
Additional Tags:	Suicide Attempt, Depression, Implied/Referenced Self-Harm, Gordon is... not doing too good here, he gets better though, im not tagging frenrey because it's barely there and not what i had planned, Bubby's in a skirt for a hot second, Tommy makes another dog for Gordon, im also not tagging boomer but it is a thing in everything i write, but it's not important or really mentioned, SO
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A Cry For Help Almost Unanswered

by IRegretNothingAndEverything

Summary

Joshua wakes up in the middle of the night to find that his father isn't in the apartment anymore. Confused, and bit scared, he remembers what his dad told him a few days ago, and finds the number on the fridge at his level, and calls Mr. Tommy.

Notes

Hey! Please mind the tags! Contains a suicide attempt, as well as mentioned self harm and just Gordon generally being sad. Also I have never been to therapy so it that is not accurate? well shit bro, sucks to suck.

See the end of the work for more notes

The wind brushed past his hair, the tangled mess barely moving. Gordon sighed softly, leaning out on the railing for a moment, staring out into the city around them. Technically speaking, he wasn't allowed on the roof, but he didn't think it mattered that much. It was nice up here in the dark, and, really, who was going to punish him for it?

No one was going to get angry at a corpse.

He had spent the last few days getting everything he could get in order without being suspicious. He told Tommy to take Joshua if anything happened to him, gave them all little trinkets that

mattered to him, his old wedding ring, a necklace from his mother. Wrote his note. It should be easy.

Gordon wondered idly why he couldn't just... get better like they had. The science team had all brushed past the events of the Cascade with ease, so it seemed, and Gordon, six months later, was still broken by it all. He jumped at too loud noises, broke down when someone tossed a soda can his way, hid in the closet far too often to be healthy for his joints. He just... wasn't getting better. Gordon bothered them for too long with this.

The railing was hard to clamber over with the prosthetic, still getting used to it, and he held onto it still, not yet letting go. It was nice, up here. Here he felt unburdened by his own mind. He shifted, turning around to look back to the roof, as if he had done this hundreds of times.

He had, hoping he would slip off and not have to make the decision to get back over and go to bed. Now he had the courage to actually go through with it. He closed his eyes, smiling to himself. God, it would be so easy to just... let go. For a moment longer, he wanted to feel the breeze here, relax into it.

"Gordon!" No... no please.... He opened his eyes, and it was confirmed. Coomer was coming out of the stairwell, and, by the looks of it, he wasn't alone.

"No..." he mumbled, watching as Tommy scrambled out of the stairwell, and, as Bubby appeared, he let go of the railing. He didn't want to give them the chance to talk him out of it. His mind was made, it, it would be easier for them all if he just-

He fell maybe two stories before he felt something grabbing as his shirt, his arm, and he tried to fight it, for just a moment, as Coomer dragged him back up and over the railing, into his arms properly.

And he broke. He clung onto Coomer, sobbing into his shoulder, and Coomer clung back. He felt Bubby thump against his side, clinging to him in a display of affection he had never seen from him, and Tommy wrapped them all up in his arms and they clung to him.

Gordon sobbed for a while, hiccuping, and they seemed to rock, but Gordon wasn't entirely sure. His head hurt and his chest hurt and he felt pathetic, but they didn't let him go. Not even when he stopped crying, and wiped his eyes. Bubby clung onto one arm, Coomer the other, and Tommy behind, as they went back downstairs to the apartment. If he looked, Gordon would have seen the fear in their eyes, but he didn't. He stayed silent, as they slipped into the apartment.

"Daddy!" Joshua was up out of Benrey's lap, and only then did the other three let him go, so Gordon could kneel down and wrap him in his arms. "I woke up and you, you weren't there, so, so I called Mr. Tommy!" So that's how they knew. Gordon nodded a moment, then stood with Joshua in his arms.

"I'm sorry for scaring you, bud. I was just upstairs on the roof. Wanted to look at the stars." It was an excuse he gave easily, ignoring the looks behind him. God, what time was it? Way too late for Joshua to still be up. "Let's get you back to bed, huh?" Joshua nodded into his shoulder, and Gordon walked him to his bedroom.

Once Joshua was back down, another story read to get him to sleep, Gordon walked wearily out into the living room, refusing to look at the group as he did. He leaned against the wall quietly, before lifting his gaze up towards them, waiting for the anger and hate to spew out at him for being such a-

And he paused.

Tommy's tears glowed. This was a fact that Gordon knew by now. The brightness of each glow meant something slightly different, almost like sweet voice in that sense. Generally, the brighter the stronger the emotion he felt. And Tommy... Tommy was almost hard to look at with the bright shining tears streaming down his face.

Immediately he felt horrible for putting that look on Tommy's face. God, he couldn't do anything right at this point could he? He looked away from Tommy, but instead his eyes fell on Bubby, who looked... angry. That he was used to, but he knew Bubby well enough to know that anger was directed at himself, not at Gordon. There were tears on his face as well, and Coomer pressed against his side.

God they were... they were all crying for him.

Gordon felt horrible. He wasn't worth crying over, wasn't worth the bright glow, or the only tears he'd ever seen Bubby cry that wasn't when Coomer proposed. He wasn't worth this. He looked away from them all, one hand coming up to cover his mouth, trying to keep from crying as well. He already had his moment. He just... Wanted to go to bed now. Get them to leave, so he could sleep and plan better next time.

"Gordon..." He didn't look over at his name, kept his head away, but closed his eyes, holding back the flood of tears. He shook his head, just slightly, but heard the creak of the couch as someone stood up.

“Just. Just get it over with. Get angry and leave so that I can go to bed.” He muttered, and it fell silent, the footsteps that had been approaching him stopping. “It’ll be easier, just... please.”

“Gordon... we’re not angry.” Coomer’s voice was so careful, and Gordon seemed to break just a bit more, hunching in on himself, tears building up in his eyes, as he desperately tried to keep them down. A moment later, he felt someone wrap their arms around him, then shuffle back towards the couch, clinging onto him, giving no choice but for him to follow, wrapping his arms around who had to be Benrey, he now realized, and soon enough he had been pulled onto Benrey’s lap, holding onto him tightly. He clung back, trying his hardest not to break down again, but the moment he heard Benrey’s sweet voice, it was over for him.

Faintly, he heard the others talking. He didn’t know how long it had been, but he did know that he was still in Benrey’s lap. He was tired, emotionally wrung out, and Gordon just wanted it to go back down. It was easier to be numb, with no feeling, no way for someone to hurt him. Benrey didn’t let him go. Gordon sighed lowly, turning his head to stare outwards, clinging.

“So... who’s gonna go through?” Tommy was talking quietly, and Bubby stood, arms crossed tightly over his chest. “No firearms, nothing sharp-”

“I wasn’t gonna use a gun. It’s too loud... would’ve woken up Joshie... he doesn’t need to see that.” Gordon spoke up, watching them quietly. “It’s... it’s... can I keep one? For protection?” He asked, voice shaking. Tommy frowned slightly, before leaning over, dragging a hand over his hair slowly.

“We’re gonna be here too, okay? If anything happens, they have to come through us.” So that was a no. That’s alright. But... he didn’t want them to have to stay for him. God, he’d just upset their entire lives for his own selfish wants. Gordon closed his eyes tightly, as he saw Bubby disappear around the corner, and a moment later he heard the bathroom door squeak.

Coomer shifted over, pressing himself against them, and Tommy settled on the other side. Benrey still hadn't let Gordon go, but that was okay. He was soft, and warm, and... and safe.

Gordon was tired.

So... he let himself drift. He could deal with this all in the morning.

Gordon woke up wrapped in a blanket on the couch. He couldn't tell what time it was, but the sun was streaming onto the floor in front of him, and he was alive.

It was disappointing.

He heard Joshua in the other room, talking excitedly about something, and closed his eyes again, sighing softly. He didn't move again, wanting to pretend, for just a moment, that everything was going to be okay. He felt a hand in his hair, but said nothing.

"Bubby... you sure you don't want anything to eat?" He heard Coomer say, and Bubby hummed just above him. He must have shook his head, as he heard Coomer say "Alright dear, but you are going to be eating lunch." and walk away. Gordon shifted, curling just a bit tighter into a ball, squeezing his eyes shut tighter.

Bubby sighed, shifting to gently push Gordon up enough to drag him into a hug tightly. Gordon shook his head slightly, but sunk into the embrace anyways. Despite sleeping, he still felt tired. Bubby held him for a moment, before pulling away and standing. "Let's go. You need to eat."

Gordon sighed, dropping the blanket into a heap on the couch and let Bubby drag him along. He smiled when he saw Joshua, watching as he turned and lit up at him. "Hi Daddy! Grampa Coomer made pancakes for me!" Gordon smiled at him, ruffling his hair as he passed. There was a chair empty next to Joshua, so he sat down next to him.

"Yeah? Did you thank him?"

"Oh... Thank you Grampa Coomer!" He grinned over at Coomer, who smiled back.

"Of course, Joshua! It's my pleasure!" Coomer smiled at Joshua, who grinned back and looked back to Gordon.

"Now I did."

"Good job Bud." He smiled, then blinked, Bubby having set a plate in front of him. He glanced around the table, noting idly that Tommy wasn't there, but Benrey was, eating a dry pancake with his hands. He narrowed his eyes at Benrey, who looked over, shrugged and looked back towards the table, not with anything specific.

Gordon sighed softly. He really really didn't want to eat, but if Joshua was eating, and he had food in front of him, Gordon would. So he did. Not much, since he really did feel sick to his stomach, but it didn't really matter. Coomer was watching him, and Joshua was right next to him.

Still, they finished breakfast right as Tommy showed up again, Sunkist in tow. Joshua grinned, getting ready to hop down, but Gordon stopped him. "You need to wash your hands before you go pet Sunkist, buddy, and that's only if you're done eating."

Joshua paused, contemplating if he was done eating or not, but Gordon assumed he would be. Coomer made pretty big pancakes, and Joshua had eaten a full one and a half of one, so he wasn't

surprised when he slid off his chair before pausing. “Granma Bubby help me?” He asked, and Bubby stood, nodding a bit.

“Yeah, alright.”

Gordon leaned a bit to watch them disappear into the bathroom, before leaning back and closing his eyes. He wasn’t excited for the conversation to come, but all that came was Benrey telling him to keep eating.

He didn’t.

Joshua came skittering around the corner a few minutes later, launching himself at Sunkist, who barked, quieter than she normally would, licking up his cheek. Joshua squealed, before Tommy crouched down next to him. “Wanna go play with Sunkist in your room?” He nodded, then looked over to Gordon.

“Can I Daddy?”

“Sure bud.” Joshua grinned, and ran off towards his room, calling for Sunkist as he went. She looked up at Tommy once, who nodded at her, and was off. Gordon trusted a dog with his son more than some humans. It was a wild thought out of context, but it was Sunkist. Nothing would happen to him with Sunkist.

Tommy came over to sit at the table as well, glancing down to see Gordon had really only eaten a half of a pancake. He frowned, but said nothing. Bubby reappeared moments later, drying his hands on his shirt. Gordon sat there in silence, glancing around them quietly.

They stayed silent. How do you talk to someone about this? They had caught him, and he still had gone ahead, jumped from the roof, even knowing Coomer could, and did, save him. There was no way to justify that, no one to explain that away, and Gordon didn’t really feel like trying.

“That’s why you told me to take care of Joshua if something happened to you.” Tommy said softly, and Gordon closed his eyes, nodding.

“I knew already. I told him that if he woke up and I wasn’t around to call you, Kept your number on the fridge in reach, taught him how to do it right. Didn’t think he’d wake up.” He pushed the plate to the side, leaning his head onto his arms on the table. “Gave you guys things to remember me if something happened. Figured you’d think I was just... getting better. Was happier.”

He didn’t notice the looks flying over his head, as he lay with his head in his arms, eyes closed. He was still so tired. This would have been so much easier if they had just let him die. Gordon said nothing of that sort, of course. He didn’t want to make them upset.

Gordon felt a hand in his hair, and relaxed into it. He could practically feel how cold they were, and knew in a moment it was Benrey, leaning over across the seat to slowly drag a hand over his scalp. He didn’t try to get through the matted mess of his hair.

“Gordon...”

“I know.” He sighed, sitting up, looking around. “I just... I’m not getting better, I’m not going to get better. I’m terrified I’m going to end up hurting my son because of this, that he’s gonna be taken away from me, and I get scared of fucking soda cans, guys.” He looked around at them, frowning. “I just... I figured it would be easier if I just... stopped burdening you with all of that. I’m sure you’ve all got your issues to, I mean, it was shitty that entire thing, and I didn’t... Mine were too much, for me, and for me to put on you guys.”

It went silent, and Gordon smiled sadly, lifting his head to look around at them. “So... guess I’m being watched now, huh? Not the first time.”

“Wait... what?” He turned to Coomer, still smiling.

“This is actually... my fifth total failed attempt, I believe? My teen years were hell, and I only actually went to the hospital for one of them. First one as at fourteen when I tried to hang myself, but that wasn’t the time I was hospitalized, that was when I was seventeen and had to have my stomach pumped and ended up in a psych ward for around two weeks. I just... stopped being able to pay for my therapist, and then stopped being able to afford my meds, and then, uh... Black Mesa happened, so...” He shrugged a shoulder, looking away from the shocked looks on their faces. “It just piled up. I need to go back, probably have enough money again, but I’d have to get rediagnosed, and I just... I’m tired.”

Coomer was up and around the table, hugging him in moments. Gordon hummed, leaning his head into Coomer’s shoulder, trying to comfort him. “I mean, I was fine there for awhile. I’m not gonna lie and say that I’m fine now, considering last night, and I... I think I can be fine again I just. Didn’t want to say anything. Black Mesa was hell for all of us, and I didn’t wanna be overbearing or act like you guys didn’t have trauma about it too.”

“Gordon, that doesn’t mean you have to hide it all. If anything it means we understand at least a bit of it.” Tommy didn’t get up, but was staring at his hands, golden tears flowing down his face. Gordon worried, for a moment, that they might be hot, but Tommy didn’t seem to be hurt by them, so Gordon continued away from that, listening to Tommy. “Not all of it, obviously, since I’m used to loss like that, and we all started differently, but we went through parts of the same things... You don’t have to hide that from us...”

“I know... I know, I do. It’s just... just a habit now, I guess. I mean, my parents never wanted to know, they were angry at me for the one time I went to the hospital since they had to pay for it, and Joshua’s mom had depression too apparently, but always got mad at me for my own cause she had ‘real depression’ and I just... stopped talking about it. It didn’t matter to anyone else, so I figured it shouldn’t.”

“I’m going to kill someone.” Bubby piped up suddenly, and Gordon shot finger guns at him.

“I call dibs.”

“NO!” Bubby looked actually horrified, and Gordon felt bad for a moment.

“Okay, so, you’re not allowed to say that.” Benrey pointed a fork at him threateningly, and Gordon just turned to him.

“What are you gonna do? Kill me?”

“I will love you and pet your hair is what I’ll fucking do.” And Benrey stood, moving over and tried to run his hand through Gordon’s hair only for it to get stuck. “... how long has it been since you brushed this?”

“Don’t ask questions you don’t want the answer to.”

“Washed it?”

“Same answer.”

They went silent for a moment before Benrey sighed. “Okay, first order of business. Shower time

for you. Bubby."

"Already cleaned out."

Benrey nodded, then stole Gordon from Coomer's arms. Gordon came willingly, smiling at them. "Really, guys, I'll... I'll be okay."

"We're not gonna leave you to stew like this, Gordon." Tommy said, and Gordon smiled, patting his shoulder as they passed.

Benrey dragged him up to the bathroom, where it did in fact appear that it had been slightly ransacked. His electric razor was still there, which was a relief, but anything sharp had been taken. Gordon wasn't really surprised, and just closed his eyes for a moment. Benrey sighed softly, pressing against his side.

"I'm okay... Really."

"Need any help?"

Gordon paused, before nodding slightly. "With my hair at least." Benrey nodded.

In reality, Gordon just... didn't want to be alone.

They managed to get the tangled mess of Gordon's hair brushed out enough that it didn't hurt to run his fingers through it. Gordon felt better after the shower, though he knew that Benrey saw the faded, and not so faded, scars on his legs. He felt like shit, after three years clean, having relapsed, but it was only once, and he held onto that, building his time back up. He was back at a week now, but Benrey didn't say anything about it.

Someone had come into his bedroom and lay out pajamas for him. They were some of the softest he had, and Gordon smiled softly, pulling them on and sitting on his bed for a moment. Benrey hadn't followed him in, so he just looked around at the mess of his room, and suddenly felt bad. They had to trudge through this to get to his clothing, and even then, who knew which was clean and which was dirty?

God, he couldn't do a single thing right at this point, could he?

He heard Joshua's voice in the other room, talking animatedly to Sunkist, and stood, shaking his head. He had to be better, if not for himself, for Joshua. For the science team. He started sorting through his clothing, but realized he didn't know which was clean or not, so just shoved any clothing out into the hamper, which overflowed, but he didn't care at this point. They could wash it somewhere.

When Coomer poked his head into the room, he saw Gordon trying to pile the various dishes hidden in his room into one thing so he could take one trip. Coomer frowned at him, before going over. "Do you... need help?"

"Oh... Hey Dr. Coomer." He glanced over, before sighing at his mess. "Probably. Not looking forward to this walk of shame." He laughed sadly, and Coomer frowned softly, helping gather the hidden cups and plates around the room. Together, it only took one trip, but still. This alerted the others to that, and, as Coomer stayed down to start the dishes, waving Gordon off from helping, the others got up, going into Gordon's room. Tommy hummed, before grabbing the hamper and disappearing with it.

Gordon slipped back in, then frowned at them. “You guys don’t need to help me, you know...”

“Well, we’re going to, so...” Bubby went silent, and Gordon sighed softly, but accepted it.

Tommy reappeared moments later, and, together, they managed to, at least on some surface level, clean up the room. Gordon was exhausted by it, debating a nap at this point, and didn’t resist when Tommy pushed him over onto the bed. Gordon sighed lowly, laying face down for a moment, before sitting up, turning towards Tommy, who was going through the dresser to properly fold things. “Let me help, Tommy.”

“Mmm, alright...” He moved over, having taken a drawer out, random pants it seemed, and dumped it on the bed next to him. Gordon hummed lowly, sitting there and slowly folding them, yawning softly as he worked. They had done enough for him already.

“So...” He looked over at Tommy, who smiled sadly at him. “You already know someone’s going to be here with you. We’re... we’re not gonna sit with you at all times, but... someone in the apartment with you and Joshua.” Gordon nodded, already expecting this.

“Joshua’s gonna like that. Especially with you around, he loves Sunkist.”

“That’s another thing! I love Sunkist a lot, but... right now I think you need her more. She’ll be staying here for a bit, and you don’t have to worry about taking care of her, because she knows how to do that perfectly fine, and she can comfort you when you’re not doing alright. That’s part of the reason I made her after all.”

“But.... don’t you need her then?” Gordon felt his heart sink, the idea of taking Tommy’s dog, even if he offered, and Tommy laughed.

“Well, I’m gonna be here a lot! Benrey too, so it’s alright, really. You aren’t taking her from me, Gordon. She’s made to do things like helping with this. I promise.” Gordon sighed softly, but nodded, and Tommy leaned over, hugging him tightly. “I promise you that I’m not upset, okay? One hundred percent my idea. She probably wouldn’t want to go home anyways. She knows when people aren’t feeling alright.”

Gordon nodded, holding onto Tommy tightly for a moment, and they went back to folding. Gordon did his one, while Tommy seemed to speed through the other two, humming as he did. As soon as it was done, Tommy stood, pushing Gordon’s shoulder lightly. “Go to bed, alright? We won’t let you sleep on, and you are tired.”

He sighed, but complied, curling up under his blanket, drifting off before Tommy even shut his door.

When he woke up, Gordon lay there for a while, quietly, wondering what woke up, before hearing Joshua’s half whispering voice. “You gotta be quite, Granma Bubby, or he’ll wake up before we can get him.”

“Oh, of course.” Bubby replied, voice quiet as well, and Gordon kept his eyes closed, hiding his smile as they crept closer, before Joshua pounced, hand skittering across his hip bones in an attempt to tickle him. Gordon laughed, squirming, and then caught the blanket in his arms and trapped Joshua in it, sending an amused look up to Bubby.

“You’re working with him?” He asked, Bubby grinning and pouncing as well, a mini wrestling match to free the laughing Joshua from the blankets before his head popped up, grinning.

“Hi Daddy! Mr. Tommy said you were taking a nap, and that I needed to wake you up for lunch!”

Gordon smiled, kissing Joshua's forehead, setting him free fully.

"Thanks kiddo. Go on, get up so we can go eat, huh?" Joshua nodded, bouncing out of bed, running to the door before turning to look back.

"Can I sit next to Mr. Benny?"

"I think that's a question for him, hmm?" Joshua nodded, then ran off. Gordon sighed lowly, smiling softly as he stood up.

"He's... the main thing you worry about, huh?" Bubby asked softly, and Gordon smiled at him, nodding.

"Of course. He's my son and I love him. That's why I asked Tommy to take care of him. I knew he'd still get to see you guys, and that he would take good care of him." Gordon sighed softly, shaking his head. "Still... It's the one pro to still being alive." With that, he walked out after Joshua, letting Bubby calm himself down after that, wiping his eyes before following.

The house had been lightly cleaned up. No deep clean, but tidied. It was a lot to Gordon, and he teared up a bit, moving into the dining room, waiting for Bubby to come in to talk. "You guys didn't need to do this."

"Nonsense Gordon! A clean home helps clear your mind and makes you feel better!" Coomer smiled at him, and brought about a large amount of grilled cheese sandwiches, which probably took the rest of the bread that Gordon had. Still, there was enough for everyone, and Gordon took one, smiling in thanks towards Coomer.

They ate in mostly silence, other than the random comments that Joshua gave. When he finished eating first, he looked around, humming. "Mr. Tommy? Can you... help me wash my hands?"

"Of course Joshua!" Tommy grinned, and for a moment, the image of Joshua following after the seven foot man got a snicker out of Gordon. It was a nice sound, and Tommy wished he had heard it more.

When they got to the bathroom, Tommy pulled out the step stool to get Joshua up near it. Joshua hummed as he washed his hands carefully, before looking over at Tommy. "You guys are gonna be around for a while, huh?"

Tommy hummed, before nodding himself. "For awhile, yeah! Sunkist too."

Joshua nodded, letting Tommy turn off the water, before turning towards him. "It's cause Daddy's sad, isn't it?"

He froze for a second, as he reached for the hand towel to dry off his hand. He snapped back quickly, before nodding. "Yeah... It's because your dad's really sad right now. How did you know that?"

"Sometimes... I'm playing in my room or, uh... or going to bed, and I... I can hear him crying. I wanna get up and hug him cause that always makes me feel better, but whenever I come back out, he acts like he wasn't crying!" Joshua looked up at him. "So I... didn't know how to help him..."

"Well... we can help him, Joshua... and I'm sure he'd appreciate your hugs any time." Tommy smiled, then carefully hugged Joshua. He hugged back tightly, still silent. "He'll be happy again, alright?"

“Alright...” Joshua didn’t sound convinced, but Tommy pulled away, grinning.

“How about... you go give him a big hug, right now?” Joshua pondered this for all of a second, before hopping down from his step stool and rushing off to hug Gordon.

"I can get Dad to pay for therapy.” Tommy said it easily, settling in his spot next to Gordon. Joshua was in his room again, with Sunkist, as well as Bubby, who he had refused to let go of until they were both in there. Gordon looked over at him, frowning slightly.

“You guys are doing enough, Tommy, I just-”

“No, listen, you’re still technically on the payroll for Black Mesa. This isn’t me doing it, it’s Black Mesa paying for the emotional damages of what they caused you. I can get him to add all of us onto it if it makes you feel better.”

Gordon paused. Thinking about it in that context made it a bit better, so he sighed, conceding the point. “I’ll have to check if the one I used to go to is still there. If so, I’m going back to her. It’ll be easier.” Tommy nodded slightly, leaning against his side.

“So...”

“So?”

He fell silent for a moment, before shifting slightly, hugging Gordon to his side. “I just... want you to be alright again. I know it’s not something I can change easily, or fix with the snap of my fingers like everything else, and I really wish that it was something I could fix... But I can’t. I can’t fix this that easily, but I’m still gonna try. With all of you. You’re... you’re all important to me, and... I don’t want to lose you.” Tommy went silent, and Gordon glanced up, but caught no glow. He still looked upset, however, so Gordon just pressed himself tighter to his side. “I’m not gonna... pretend I get it, cause I don’t not really, so I’m not gonna act like I do. I just... want you to know that I’m here. Even if you just wanna vent, or you’re feeling bad and want someone to sit there with you... Just... please don’t think we don’t care.” Gordon caught the glow, and realized, yes, Tommy’s tears did feel a bit warm, but not hot like he expected.

“I promise... I’ll try?” Gordon had no doubts his own brain would get in the way again, and Tommy sniffled, nodding a bit.

“That’s good enough.” Tommy smiled at him, then just... clung onto him for another moment. Gordon let him, then lifted his head, hearing a rather loud noise from Joshua’s room, followed by Bubby’s booming laughter. Gordon groaned softly, but stood.

“Bubby, you better not be lighting things on fire in my child’s room!” The laughter suddenly cut off, followed by worrying shushing noises, as Gordon groaned louder, going into the room to hopefully stop whatever destruction was going on.

Tommy stayed sitting on the couch, watching after him, trying to dry his eyes, though he knew the others would know until they had fully dried. It kinda sucked, sometimes, glowing like he did, but he didn’t mind too much. It was nice in the long run, but he did like to just cry and not have to worry about people knowing for hours afterwards.

He had almost been asleep when Joshua had called him. He had been worrying about Gordon, he knew that Gordon suddenly being happy, giving them little trinkets and presents, it wasn’t good, but... Tommy didn’t know how bad. It clicked the moment he had heard Joshua's little voice saying “Daddy isn’t in the apartment... he said to call you if he wasn’t here, so I did!”

It was terrifying. He sent Sunkist to get the others, Coomer and Bubby first, fearing the worst, and had gotten there as quickly as his abilities would allow. Joshua didn't seem that worried, but he was four, so it didn't do anything to ease Tommy's fears.

The rest of the group was there just as quickly, thanks to Sunkist and Benrey's own abilities, and, after Joshua mentioned going up to the roof to look at the stars one time, they left Benrey behind and ran up.

Seeing Gordon on the other side of that railing scared him. He was terrified in that moment, and when Gordon let go, his heart stopped. He knew that Coomer's extendo arms came in handy, and luckily they had pulled Gordon back over, but Tommy didn't breathe right until they were back in the apartment, until Gordon was back in the apartment.

He was safe. That's what mattered to him at that moment. Gordon was safe, and... he had expected them to get angry with him. That was one of the most confusing moments of his life, hearing that Gordon had expected them to be angry. In a moment, Tommy had really felt angry, not at Gordon, but at everyone who had given Gordon the idea that they were going to be angry, that his feelings deserve their anger. The star in him burnt bright in red hot rage, and bone deep sadness. Gordon had been so hurt, and Tommy never even knew.

To be fair, he had been around when Gordon had been so selfishly hurt... but he still hated to think that someone did that to him. Someone hurt his friend, and now he was conditioned to think his emotions deserved anger.

Tommy wondered, for a moment, what would happen if he did hurt someone like that. If he tracked down the people that hurt Gordon and hurt them back. It wasn't a good thing, and he wasn't going to do it, but just for a moment, he wondered. Wondered if he could hurt them, show them how much he had hurt Gordon, and if they would even care. He wanted them to care.

Still. All Tommy could do now was care for Gordon. All he could do was hope that Gordon was going to be okay in the end. If anyone deserved it, it was him. He deserved to be happy. He deserved to feel okay again. Tommy would fight tooth and nail, he would fight everyone and every star in the universe, if it meant that Gordon Freeman was going to be okay.

"You alright Tommy?" He looked up at Gordon as he came back in, and smiled.

"Yeah. I'm alright." Gordon nodded, not fully convinced, but settled against his side again, and Tommy hummed, wrapping one arm around him and holding him tight.

She had still been working, and accepted him back rather quickly. It was a bit of a surprise to Gordon, that Mia was still around at this point, and that she accepted him back that quickly.

Turns out, she had been worried about him upon finding out that he had stopped taking his meds. Which... valid. Completely.

"So... you're back for a specific reason, I'm sure." Mia smiled softly, and Gordon hummed for a moment.

"So... A lot of this is actually classified information, as in, I'm getting hush money to not talk about it, but... around six months ago I almost died, bonded with the people I almost died with, and then uh... they caught me trying to kill myself about a week ago. So... Tommy, one of my friends, got his dad to get the company that we worked for to pay for all of this again. So I'm back."

Mia blinked once. "It seems we have a lot to talk about, Gordon."

Gordon actually laughed, looking over at her. “Oh you have no idea.”

Seeing as Gordon didn’t actually know how much they could talk about Black Mesa, they tended to stray away from that. However, he did catch her up on as much as he could. Joshua had been born, he had made a few friends, which he took a good amount of time to talk on, just so she had the context for some of these things, all the way up to the new job. It was nearing the end of the hour when he paused.

“Also, uh... Tommy says his dad is a bit protective? So you may end up getting a visit from an eight-foot tall guy in a suit, and uh, that’s his dad. He won’t hurt you or anything, but it is really disconcerting when it happens.”

Mia paused for a moment, before nodding. “Alright?”

“I know. Sounds crazy. Again, classified until I am told otherwise.” He laughed softly, shaking his head.

Bubby was the one to pick him up. Also had been the one to drop him off. Gordon didn’t realize Bubby hadn’t moved an inch from his spot, just sitting at the building parking lot and staring.

He contributed to this. He was part of the problem, he conspired to get his arm cut off, and now Gordon couldn’t go into a dark room, or be the first to go into a room at all. Bubby had been a part of that.

God, what had he been thinking. Coomer had said that the trackers were everywhere. It wasn’t going to help. Why had he even done that? Because Benrey wanted to play a prank? He knew that Gordon would be hurt by that, he knew that it would be bad for him, he knew this all, and still went through with it! What kind of friend was he?

Bubby groaned softly, hitting his head on the steer wheel a few times, before leaning forwards and sinking his teeth into it, glaring out the front windshield. This was stupid. The whole thing was stupid. Gordon forgave him, though it was probably helped by him making the arm that he had now. He still felt like shit over it.

He sat there, grinding his teeth into the steering wheel among a bunch of other bite marks along the wheel. Bubby felt better with it, but it was still horrible. He was still horrible.

Seeing Gordon disappear over the edge of that building brought too many emotions for Bubby to handle up. He had spent the past six months trying to figure out how to make it up to Gordon, and sure, maybe he had done his best, but in that moment, his best hadn’t been enough.

Tears welled up in his eyes and he covered his eyes quickly with an arm, growling softly to himself. He didn’t want to fall into the same trap that Gordon, thinking the other’s emotions were more important than his own, but at the moment? Picking Gordon up from a therapy appointment? This wasn’t the time for this. He’d talk to Harold about it later, and took a moment, just to breathe. Calm himself down so Gordon didn’t come down and see him crying.

Just in time too, as he sat up, spotting Gordon walking out of the building. He honked his horn, and grinned at Gordon, who huffed, flipping him off as he walked over, settling into the passenger seat. “Sup.”

“Hey.” He mumbled, yawning softly as he settled into his spot, staring out the windshield. This was one of the few times Bubby drove carefully, instead of the complete abandon for his, and anyone else’s, safety. Gordon hummed lowly, leaning forwards to flick on the radio, and Bubby

didn’t smack his hand away as he normally would.

It wasn’t an awkward silence, but it wasn’t completely comfortable. Bubby had no clue what to do in this situation, and Gordon didn’t give anything. That was alright, but Bubby still worried about it.

He did crack a smile when he saw Joshua standing outside on Tommy’s shoulders as they pulled up. Gordon thanked Bubby softly as he stepped out of the car, ignoring Bubby’s grumbling that he didn’t need to thank him.

“Hi Daddy! Hi Granma Bubby! I’m tall!” Gordon laughed, looking up at him.

“That you are buddy! But I can’t hug you when you’re all the way up there!” Joshua pondered this, before gently patting Tommy’s forehead.

“I wanna hug Daddy... put me down please?” Tommy hummed, before lifting Joshua over his head to hand him over to Gordon, who clung onto him tightly, as Joshua clung back. Bubby and Tommy made eye contact over their heads, and Bubby shrugged a shoulder. Tommy nodded slightly, and led them inside.

Bubby hesitated a moment, staring out at his car, before deciding he wasn’t... really feeling up to people, stepping back down into the parking lot and driving off again, no real destination in mind.

Coomer usually was up making breakfast when Gordon woke up. It was nice, to actually eat something on a more regular basis, as he often had ended up just making food for Joshua and forgetting to eat. It was a bit weird at first, as they got used to him not eating nearly as much as they did, but they got the hang of it.

With them all around as much as they were, Gordon was getting used to taking care of everything properly, and he wasn’t as tired as often. He started making dinner again, maybe two weeks after catching him.

He showed them his meatloaf recipe, but shooed Coomer out of the line of sight for a moment while he messed with spices. When asked why, Gordon just smiled at him, saying it was a family recipe, and, despite them being family, he wasn’t going to share it yet.

Gordon just felt a bit more comfortable knowing he had that fall back, another reason he couldn’t go yet. He wasn’t going to say that to anyone, but it was better.

Tommy had to go home for a period of time that night, and that left him, Coomer, and Benrey, who had taken up space on his couch and never left, as Bubby was out on another drive, though this time with the excuse of wanting to see the stars proper instead of in a city. Joshua was already sleeping when Tommy left, and Benrey was doing his strange half sleep, curled up as if he were sleeping, though the slightest movement would wake him up. Gordon was settled on the couch next to him, after Coomer had shooed him from the kitchen, so he could clean it up.

To be fair? Coomer was a nervous cleaner. If something happened, he would clean, just to work out all the nervous energy when he wasn’t allowed to go out and fight something. Gordon, as much as he wanted to help, would be in his way.

As he cleaned, Harold thought, his mind cast back on that night on the roof, as much as he hated thinking about it. He almost lost Gordon in that moment, and he wasn’t sure what would have happened if they did lose him.

Harold had been terrified, watching Gordon tip back out of view, and had used both power legs and extendo arms to fling himself over to the edge, grab onto anything he could reach of Gordon, drag him back up even if he fought it. Harold had cried before he even had Gordon in his arms, and was just so relieved to bring him back up, safe.

He paused for a moment, realizing that he had finished the dishes and had nothing really left to clean, as he had spent the last two weeks cleaning anything he could get his hands on. Harold huffed a sigh, before shaking his head, and walking out to the living room.

The moment he could, Harold tugged Gordon into a hug. Gordon paused, sputtering for a moment, but hugged back. “Uh... what’s this about?”

“I just thought we both needed a hug, Gordon.”

There was a pause, before Benrey sat up, pressing himself against their sides. “Bro, group hug.”

Harold felt Gordon snort against his side, but shift, one arm wrapping around Benrey as well to tug him in. Harold did the same, and, for a moment, they just sat there, before Benrey broke off to lay back down. Gordon settled back into his spot, Harold against his side.

“So... why did we need a hug?”

He didn’t answer for a moment, sighing lowly. “Well... I was just thinking, is all, made myself sad for a moment. Thought that you wouldn’t mind a hug.”

“No, no, I never mind one. You alright? Or is it the thing where everyone starts thinking about the rooftop and getting sad about it?” Gordon looked over, and Harold laughed softly, nodding slightly.

“Got it in one. I was... terrified I wouldn’t catch you in time.” He admitted softly, and Gordon nodded.

“For a second, I wished you hadn’t.”

“I know... I’m not going to apologize for that, though.”

It got a laugh out of Gordon, who nodded, pressing his shoulder against Harold’s. “I know... I wasn’t going to ask you to. Even if... All I can convince myself to have is small reasons to live, I’m uh... trying. I guess. Like, the, the meatloaf thing? It isn’t really a secret, but if you don’t know, who else is gonna pass it to Joshua when he grows up able to cook, you know? It’s not... a long term thing, but it’s keeping me going so I don’t think about what would’ve happened if you hadn’t gotten me in time...”

Harold nodded slowly, wrapping his arm around Gordon again, hugging him close. “I just... I hope eventually we can be your long term reasons, Gordon.”

He felt Gordon smile against his shoulder, a slight nod. “Yeah... yeah I hope so too.”

They said nothing for a moment, as Gordon relaxed against Harold’s shoulder, and Harold let himself wish, for just a moment, that Gordon was going to be okay. He held onto that wish tightly, and Gordon even tighter.

“So... you weren’t lying to me.” Gordon grinned at her as he settled into his chair.

“G-Man come by?”

“You call him that?”

“I mean... Tommy doesn’t, but that’s because he calls him Dad, and, as far as we know, he’s only been called G-Man by everyone else so... I guess so.”

Mia paused for a moment, before nodding. “I assume he visited you as well?”

“Mm, yeah... I am now allowed to tell you basically everything that happened in Black Mesa. It’s... it’s a lot.”

“Well... let’s get started then.”

So, he did. Gordon started in on the whole mess that was Black Mesa. From getting harassed by Benrey the entire, which he did make sure to preface was a lot of miscommunication on both of their parts, the constant threat of being attacked, being tracked by the US Military. He did pause, before looking down towards his right hand, looking back to Mia. “And uh, Bubby and Benrey got my arm cut off, but they didn’t think that was going to happen, so-”

“Wait, pause.”

“No, no, I promise, it’s fine, Bubby made this arm and Benrey thought it was going to grow back, and they just thought the Military were going to beat me up, and I had the trackers in my suit that were leading them to us in the first place. Besides, Bubby was locked back in his tube for a period of time, and we killed Benrey, and for a period of time I had a gun arm.”

Mia stared at him quietly. “If I hadn’t met G-Man myself, you’d sound crazy.”

“I know. I do. So, uh, we went to an alien planet to fight Benrey, and he had a weird monologue thing? And apparently this was all caused because I came into work with a dick slip? Which is... wild as hell, since I got home and wasn’t wearing a packer, so I don’t think I was wearing one when I got there, unless... I lost my dick in Black Mesa...” He pondered this a moment, blinking once, before shaking his head. “Either way, it’s all okay now, Benrey came back and apologized, Coomer apologized for attacking me with his clones-”

“You completely brushed over that part.”

“I’ll get back to it, Bubby built me this arm to apologize for getting it cut off in the first place, which is actually how I found out that Coomer’s enhancements were also built and maintained by Bubby, and Tommy... never actually hurt me? And he brought Sunkist around, she’s amazing, very soft.”

Mia hummed softly, looking down at her notepad for a moment. “So... very... very eventful. I’m trying to get you rediagnosed, but all of this may have changed the diagnosis. I’m still gonna get you back on the meds you were on previously, since they did help, right?”

“Mhm.”

“Good... I’m also going to see about the PTSD diagnosis, since I’m sure you qualify for that. You said Tommy’s dog, Sunkist, was a service dog?”

“I dunno if she’s registered or anything, but Tommy made her, and she’s been pretty good for me so far.”

She nodded, scribbling something on her pad again, before looking up at him. “If we can get that diagnosis, I would recommend you get your own service dog.”

“Oh, maybe Tommy can make another dog. I think he might have fun with that, considering we’re... basically doing nothing.” Gordon grinned, wondering if he would let Tommy name that dog as well.

“In the meantime, I want to focus on one thing at a time, work through that, and then move on to the next. Perhaps it would be easiest to do that chronologically, but that’s for next time, I’m sure.” Mia smiled, and Gordon nodded a bit, thinking back.

“So we start with the Cascade. That’s gonna be fun.”

Bubby was downstairs for him again, and, when Gordon got into the car, Bubby looked at him. “So... Harold’s making dinner... but Tommy is helping him, and thus Harold is enabling his concoctions.”

“Mmmm.” Gordon frowned, knowing the last time Tommy had been allowed to cook had ended up with everyone, but Tommy, having food poisoning.

“Wanna go to McDonald's and then throw away the bag in the dumpster outside your apartment so that our shame is hidden and no one knows we opted out of food poisoning VIA Tommy’s cooking?”

“I think they would still know when we don’t eat whatever the hell it is he’s gonna prepare for us this time, but hell yeah.”

Benrey didn’t sleep, at least, not like a human defined it. He was usually awake late into the night, both because he could be, and because he had appointed himself the night watch man those weeks ago. He didn’t think Gordon was going to hurt himself, but it was better safe than sorry, so, he stayed on the couch, playing through whatever game that Gordon had on his PlayStation at this point.

He... wondered, as he played. Really, his mind wasn’t used to being so fixated on one thing at a time, used to jumping from item to item and leaving everyone around him confused, while they stay back and leave him confused. So, staying pondering one thing for an extender period of time? It just... wasn’t normal. Not for him, at the very least.

Maybe it was because he hadn’t been on the roof with them. Benrey had volunteered to stay down with Joshua, so he wasn’t too worried, and Benrey’s sweet voice was very good at distracting small children. He had learned this rather quickly. Still, maybe not actually seeing what had happened might have been a mistake.

Idly, he wondered how far Gordon had fallen before Coomer had managed to catch him. Benrey felt the panic build for a second, before he forced himself to blow out blue, letting it surround him. Calm. Gordon was fine, physically at least. He was in the apartment, he was safe, and Benrey was here to make sure of that.

After a second of sitting in the blue, he paused his game, standing and going towards Gordon’s door, slipping through the wood to peek in just in case.

Gordon was lying in bed, facing towards the door. For a moment, Benrey thought he was asleep, and thus shifted to pull away, calmed down that he was still there, when Gordon hummed. “What’s up Benrey?”

He paused, before turning back, moving into the room and sitting on the floor next to the bed, balancing his chin on the mattress and staring at him quietly. Gordon stared back, and Benrey hummed, letting a few notes of sweet voice slip out and float around them, still blue. Gordon knew what blue was, right?

“Feeling alright?” He asked softly, and Benrey nodded, blowing a few notes toward Gordon specifically, and Gordon let them hit him, disappearing there as the calming slipped through him. “Mm... is this another one of you guys thinking about the roof thing?”

“The roof thing.” Benrey repeated, and Gordon smiled softly at him.

“Yeah. I’m just gonna call it that. It’s, uh, easier, I guess? Like, I don’t wanna just ‘oh, they watched me trying to jump off a roof’ like, it’s not. That doesn’t sound right? So. The roof thing.”

Benrey huffed lowly, replenishing the blue as it dissipated. “Mm... I guess it was...”

“Yeah. You’ve all been doing that, and I get it, I do. Processing emotions is hard. Not surprised you guys have managed to do it and are trying to like... communicate them now.” Gordon shrugged one shoulder, and Benrey nodded again.

“I uh... I think I’m glad I wasn’t... up there when it happened. So I didn’t see it happen...”

“Understandable. Not a fun sight, coming in on something like that.” Benrey didn’t ask Gordon to elaborate on that. He figured that he already understood what Gordon meant. “So I’m kinda... glad you didn’t see it. I don’t think they’re gonna quite recover perfectly from seeing that kind of thing, you know?”

“Tommy might panic if Joshua calls him.”

Gordon sighed, but nodded, then shifted slightly, pulling the covers back slightly. “C’mere.”

Benrey hesitated for a second, before crawling up, hips popping strangely as his body bent in a way that wasn’t human. Gordon didn’t seem to care, just pulled the blanket over him and wrapped him up in his arms. Benrey clung back, then nodded slightly.

“Can uh, can watch you better from here. Can’t steal anything if I got you.” Benrey muttered, and Gordon smiled indulgently into his hair, holding him a bit tighter.

“Nope... can’t steal a single thing...” He murmured, closing his eyes and drifting off to sleep far easier than he had alone.

Unseen by either, a skeleton moved into the living room and shut the TV off.

“So, let me get this straight.” Mia paused, letting Gordon snicker, and sent him a look. “You know what I mean. The only one you trusted fully the entire time was Tommy, Coomer attacked you for a moment after what I can only assume was a dissociative episode, which he may need some help with, and Bubby and Benrey got your arm cut off, but not on purpose. G-Man was basically there the entire time but did nothing to help any of you, despite his son being one of the people caught?”

“Uh... yeah, got it in one. Throw in a near constant fight or flight reflex, aliens, and being hunted down by the US Military, and you’ve got a fun little mix, huh?” Gordon grinned at her, and she hummed, nodding.

“Well, let me just say, you’ve been doing well for someone who went through all of that.”

“Doc, you do know I tried to throw myself off the roof, right?”

“Yes, yes, I know, but it happened far later than most would expect from someone who went through such extreme trauma. I’m quite proud of you, and you’ve been doing better since your attempt. I do have to ask, any more thoughts of such?”

“I’m not... happy about being alive still, but no, I’m not gonna try again, not gonna plan to at the moment, at the very least. Besides, even if I did, Tommy and Benrey have been in my house the entire time since, I doubt that I would even be able to if I wanted to.”

Mia blinked at him, and Gordon just grinned.

“No, I’m not gonna try again.”

“I understood that, Gordon, you’re fine. Still, I think it’s good that you’ve got that support system around, and I’m sure it’s helping them to see you around, and well. I think it’s good for you. How’s Tommy coming along with the dog?”

“Oh, he says he's almost ready. I let him name him, so now I’m getting a German Shepard named Fanta. He and Sunkist are apparently going to get along wonderfully, and I trust Tommy enough to know what the dogs he makes are gonna be like.”

Mia nodded, smiling. “I want you to bring Fanta next time you can, alright?” Gordon nodded, and they ended the session soon after.

Bubby was there as usual, but he was grinning as Gordon came out, and Gordon stared at him for a moment, eyes narrowed, getting into the car next to him. “What are you grinning about?”

“Don’t worry about it.”

“I’m worrying about it.”

Bubby turned on Dr. Feelgood to drown Gordon out, who just grinned at him, then reached over and put his cold metal hand against the back of Bubby’s neck.

They had to pull over for a second so Bubby didn’t crash the car.

The car pulled into the apartment complex, and Bubby bounced out quicker than Gordon, leaving Gordon no choice but to follow him, just to make sure that Bubby didn’t light anything on fire with how excited he was.

As he slid into the apartment, he froze, then smiled, realizing what had gotten Bubby so worked up.

Besides Sunkist, was another dog her size, but a German Shepard, perfectly posed and standing next to her. Both were wearing their service dog vests, and Fanta had a small folder in his mouth. Gordon went over, falling to his knees next to him and taking the folder from him carefully.

“He woke up while you were gone, so I thought it would be good to surprise you with him!” Tommy grinned, and Gordon hummed softly, carefully petting his head. “Sunkist is wearing hers so they match, but I was trying to get him used to his. You can take him out of it now, though!”

Gordon did just that, setting the vest to the side and wrapping his arms around Fanta’s neck. He barked, squirming and pressing close to his side, knocking him over, and Gordon laughed, half wrestling with him on the floor as he did. Once Sunkist was also free, she circled them, barking and

bouncing, and Gordon laughed, freeing himself from underneath the dog, ponytail half out and grinning up at Tommy. “Thanks Tommy.”

“It was no big deal, Mr. Freeman! I had a lot of fun making him, and it’ll be nice for Sunkist to have a friend too!” Gordon nodded, then looked up at him, humming.

“It’s... more than that.” He said simply, and Tommy nodded slightly, sitting on the floor next to him. Bubby had to tug down his skirt slightly to be able to sit next to them, pressed against Gordon’s other side, with Coomer on Bubby’s other side. Benrey sat next to Tommy, and Sunkist lay across both of their laps, while Fanta lay himself long ways on Gordon’s legs. Joshua was on the couch above them, hands in Gordon’s hair and idly talking out loud about wanting his own hair that long.

Gordon hummed lowly, carefully petting behind his ears, and smiled. Maybe he didn’t have a long term reason yet, even with everyone around him, and maybe it might be a while before he could find it in himself to look farther than next weeks’ therapy session, but that was alright. For now, he could sit in the moment, with Fanta on his lap, and his family on all sides.

End Notes

so! Please tell me just how much you hate me for putting you through that! I live on your tears baby!

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